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AUTHOR Hornbeck, David W.
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ABSTRACT

Chief state school officers have committed themselves to seek the elimination of the nation's dropout problem by the turn of the century. Two reasons are given for this unusually strong statement. First is the human or moral issue that leaves millions of youth destined to a life of poverty if school cannot be successful in meeting their needs. Second, a whole new set of demographic and economic circumstances have created an imperative need to succeed with all kids. A recently released study states that family poverty rates have risen to a 1986 level of 11.4 percent after dropping to 8.8 percent in 1973, and 43 percent of black male high school dropouts reported no earnings in 1984, as compared to 14.2 percent in 1973. The chiefs call for states to guarantee that their schools will have sustained student progress, certified staff, up-to-date and adequate learning technologies, safe and functional facilities, early childhood programs, family participation, supporting health and social services, and procedures in place to ensure these guarantees. The goal of a 100 percent graduation rate by the year 2000 will require new commitment, bold courage, support from people inside and outside the educational system, and more resources. (LMS)

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SOUTHERN EDUCATION FOUNDATION

NOVEMBER 18, 1987

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

TOUGH CHOICES FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

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Remarks By
David W. Hornbeck
Maryland State Superintendent of Schools

EA 020 351

SOUTHERN EDUCATION FOUNDATION

GOOD AFTERNOON LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. I AM DELIGHTED TO JOIN YOU TODAY TO PARTICIPATE IN YOUR DISCUSSION OF "TOUGH CHOICES FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY."

SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES THAT I'VE BEEN ENGAGED IN DURING THESE PAST FEW DAYS AND OVER THE COURSE OF THE PAST YEAR IN MY ROLE AS PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS BEAR DIRECTLY ON THIS SET OF ISSUES. MONDAY AFTERNOON, NOVEMBER 16, AT ITS ANNUAL MEETING THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS MADE AN UNUSUALLY STRONG COMMITMENT TO SEEKING TO ELIMINATE THE NATION'S DROP-OUT PROBLEM BY THE TURN OF THE CENTURY. TO DO SO THE COUNCIL AFFIRMED THE HIGHER EXPECTATIONS THAT ARE THE PRODUCT OF THE LAST DECADE OF EDUCATION REFORMS, BUT DECLARED THAT EXTRA EFFORT BY SCHOOLS IS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE THE VIRTUAL ONE HUNDRED PERCENT GRADUATION RATE THAT IS OUR OBJECTIVE.

THE MOTIVATION FOR THIS STRONG NEW STATEMENT IS TWO-FOLD. FIRST, WE ARE, AS YOU WELL KNOW, LOSING SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF THE NATION'S YOUTH. TO MAKE THAT OBSERVATION IS TO TAKE NOTHING FROM THE EDUCATION SYSTEM'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS. THOSE ACCOMPLISH-MENTS ARE SUBSTANTIAL. IN 1910 ABOUT TEN PERCENT OF THE NATION'S YOUTH GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL. IN THE FIFTIES, IT WAS UP TO FIFTY PERCENT. NOW WE ARE AT ABOUT SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT ON THE AVERAGE. MOREOVER, WHILE SOME OF OUR CITIES HAVE SUBSTANTIAL FAILURE RATES--SOME WITH MORE YOUNGSTERS LEAVING SCHOOL BETWEEN

GRADES 9 AND 12 THAN GRADUATING--THERE ARE CITIES WHERE SIGNS OF SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS ARE EVIDENT.

NEVERTHELESS, THE FACT REMAINS THAT MILLIONS OF OUR YOUTH ARE DESTINED TO A LIFE OF POVERTY AND WORSE, DUE TO OUR FAILURE AS A SOCIETY TO UNLOCK THE DOORS OF SCHOOL SUCCESS FOR THEM. SO THE FIRST REASON FOR THE COUNCIL'S NEW POLICY STATEMENT IS A HUMAN, OR MORAL, OR ETHICAL ONE.

HOWEVER, THE EVIDENCE IS ABUNDANT THAT HUMAN, MORAL, OR ETHICAL REASONS ARE NOT ENOUGH TO PRODUCE THE IMAGINATION, THE WILL, THE RESOURCES NECESSARY TO GET A TOUGH JOB DONE. THUS, THE SECOND REASON FOR THE CHIEF'S STATEMENT IS A WHOLE NEW SET OF DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES THAT CREATE AN ECONOMIC IMPERATIVE THAT WE SUCCEED WITH ALL KIDS. THOSE FACTS ARE RELATIVELY EASILY SUMMARIZED. WE MUST WORK SMARTER, NOT CHEAPER, IF WE ARE GOING TO COMPETE EFFECTIVELY IN THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET PLACE. LET ME SHARE WITH YOU SOME FACTS. THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO SEVENTEEN PEOPLE WORKED FOR EVERY ONE PERSON WHO WAS RETIRED. WITHIN THE NEXT FEW YEARS ONLY THREE PEOPLE WILL BE AT WORK FOR EACH PERSON WHO IS RETIRED. OUT OF THAT THREE, ONE WILL BE A MINORITY PERSON. WE ALSO KNOW THAT MINORITIES ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY REPRESENTED AMONG THE POOR. THEY ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY REPRESENTED AMONG THOSE WITH WHOM SCHOOLS HAVE FAILED. BUT LET ME GO BEYOND THOSE NUMBERS AND SHARE A HANDFUL OF NEW STATISTICS THAT HAVE RECENTLY COME TO MY ATTENTION FROM A SOON TO BE PUBLISHED REPORT OF THE W. T. GRANT COMMISSION ON FAMILY, WORK, AND CITIZENSHIP.

- DURING THE TWENTY-SIX YEARS FROM 1947 TO 1973 AMERICAN FAMILIES' PURCHASING POWER DOUBLED. IN THE LAST FIFTEEN YEARS THE MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME HAS ACTUALLY DECLINED BY $262.

- FAMILY POVERTY RATES, WHICH HAD BEEN CUT BY MORE THAN HALF BETWEEN 1959 AND 1973, FROM 18.5 PERCENT TO 8.8 PERCENT, HAVE RISEN TO A 1986 LEVEL OF 11.4 PERCENT.

- THE POOREST FORTY PERCENT OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVED ONLY 15.4 PERCENT OF 1986 INCOME.

- MALE WORKERS, AGES 18-24, REAL MEDIAN INCOMES IN 1984 WERE FULLY ONE-THIRD LESS THAN THE IDENTICAL AGE GROUP EARNED ELEVEN YEARS EARLIER.

- 14.2 PERCENT OF BLACK MALE HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS REPORTED NO EARNINGS IN 1973 COMPARED TO 43 PERCENT IN 1984.

- REAL EARNINGS FOR 20-24-YEAR-OLD MALES FELL SO SHARPLY IN 1984 THAT ONLY 41.7 PERCENT OF THEM COULD SUPPORT A FAMILY OF THREE AT INCOMES ABOVE THE POVERTY LINE. AMONG BLACK, NON-HISPANIC 20-24-YEAR-OLD MALES ONLY 23.3 PERCENT COULD SUPPORT A FAMILY OF THREE ABOVE THE POVERTY LINE IN 1984.

THOSE FACTS ARE, OF COURSE, EXTRAORDINARY AND DEEPLY DISTURBING. THEY OUTLINE THE PARAMETERS OF THE IMPERATIVE THAT FACES US AS A NATION. "BUSINESS AS USUAL" IS NOT GOING TO BE ADEQUATELY RESPONSIVE TO THAT IMPERATIVE. IT IS IN THAT CONTEXT THAT THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS ADOPTED ITS STATEMENT ON MONDAY. IT IS A FAR-REACHING STATEMENT. IT IS ROOTED IN THE FIRST INSTANCE IN SEVERAL PRINCIPLES. IT ASSERTS THE NEED FOR FISCAL EQUITY. THE DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES IN OUR STATES TODAY REMAINS LARGELY UNJUST AND INEQUITABLE. I ILLUSTRATE FROM MY OWN STATE, WHICH IN FACT IS BETTER THAN MOST, BUT WHERE THERE REMAINS A 1.7:1 SPENDING RATIO PER PUPIL BETWEEN THE HIGHEST SPENDING SYSTEMS AND THE LOWEST SPENDING SYSTEMS. THAT TRANSLATES INTO ABOUT $2,000 PER CHILD OR TO ABOUT $50,000 PER CLASSROOM OF 25 CHILDREN. THAT DIFFERENCE IS ROOTED NOT IN NEED, NOT IN WANTING A GOOD EDUCATION, BUT LARGELY IN THE

ACCIDENT OF BIRTH OR RESIDENCE. A SECOND UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE OF THE POLICY STATEMENT IS THAT EACH PERSON HAS THE CAPACITY TO MEET THE STANDARDS FOR A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA. WE MUST BELIEVE THAT; WE MUST ACT ON THAT BELIEF. THE STATEMENT GOES ON TO SAY THAT DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS LEARN IN DIFFERENT WAYS. THAT LEADS TO THE CONCLUSION THAT HOW STUDENTS LEARN AND WHERE THEY LEARN AND WHEN THEY LEARN AND WHO TEACHES THEM MAY VARY AND THE VARIATIONS SHOULD DEPEND UPON WHAT WORKS, BUT WHAT STUDENTS LEARN SHOULD NOT VARY. WHAT EACH STUDENT LEARNS MUST INCLUDE A CHALLENGING AND COMMON CURRICULUM. WE CANNOT HAVE SOME STUDENTS WITH A WATERED DOWN CURRICULUM ON THE ONE HAND AND OTHERS WITH AN ENRICHED AND CHALLENGING CURRICULUM ON THE OTHER.

THE CHIEFS' STATEMENT THEN GOES ON TO CALL FOR A SERIES OF GUARANTEES MADE BY INDIVIDUAL STATES. LET ME UNDERLINE THE FACT THAT I SAY STATE GUARANTEES NOT STATE EDUCATION AGENCY GUARANTEES. SCHOOLS BY THEMSELVES CANNOT ACCOMPLISH THIS JOB. IT IS GOING TO REQUIRE THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE WIDER COMMUNITY, HEALTH AGENCIES, SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCIES, THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND SO ON.

THE GUARANTEES TO WHICH I REFER INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- ENROLLMENT IN A SCHOOL THAT DEMONSTRATES SUBSTANTIAL AND SUSTAINED STUDENT PROGRESS
- ENROLLMENT IN A SCHOOL WITH AN APPROPRIATELY CERTIFIED STAFF
- ENROLLMENT IN A SCHOOL WITH SYSTEMATICALLY DESIGNED AND DELIVERED INSTRUCTION OF DEMONSTRABLE EFFECTIVENESS AND WITH ADEQUATE AND UP-TO-DATE LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES AND MATERIALS OF PROVEN VALUE
- ENROLLMENT IN A SCHOOL WITH SAFE AND FUNCTIONAL FACILITIES

- APPARENT EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM BEGINNING IDEALLY FOR CHILDREN BY AGE 3 BUT NO LATER THAN AGE 4
- A PROGRAM FOR PARTICIPATION OF FAMILIES AS PARTNERS IN LEARNING AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL
- EFFECTIVE SUPPORTING HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
- PROCEDURES BY WHICH STUDENTS AND PARENTS OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVES CAN BE ASSURED THAT ALL THE OTHER GUARANTEES ARE MET.

LET ME EMPHASIZE THAT WHEN THE STATEMENT CALLS FOR GUARANTEES, IT MEANS JUST THAT. WE DO NOT ENVISION THIS AS SIMPLY A RHETORICAL STATEMENT. WE ENVISION IT BEING PICKED UP AT VARIOUS POINTS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES AND ENACTED INTO LAW, WITH THE LAW TRANSLATING THOSE GUARANTEES INTO REALITY. INDEED, I WOULD URGE YOU, WHEN YOU GO BACK HOME, TO WRITE OR CALL YOUR CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICER AND OFFER YOUR ASSISTANCE IN DESIGNING THE MANNER IN WHICH THOSE GUARANTEES WILL BE FRAMED IN YOUR STATE.

SOMETIMES, AS YOU WELL KNOW, POLICY STATEMENTS REMAIN JUST THAT--STATEMENTS. THE STATEMENT WE PASSED ON MONDAY, HOWEVER, WAS ACCOMPANIED BY A PIECE OF MODEL LEGISLATION. THE MODEL LEGISLATION TRANSLATES THE GUARANTEES INTO STATUTORY LANGUAGE TO ILLUSTRATE THE QUALITY, THE SCOPE, AND THE DEPTH OF WHAT IS ENVISIONED BY THE GUARANTEES. LET ME SHARE WITH YOU THE OUTLINES OF THAT STATUTE.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, THE STATUTE GUARANTEES TO ALL DISADVANTAGED YOUNGSTERS A QUALITY PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM. THAT IS BASIC. AS BRAD BUTLER, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND FORMER CEO OF PROCTOR AND GAMBLE, ONCE SAID TO MY GOVERNOR, IT IS "A MORAL BLUNDER AND ECONOMIC STUPIDITY FOR ANY STATE IN THIS NATION NOT TO OFFER TO ALL OF ITS

CHILDREN WHO LIVE IN POVERTY THE OPPORTUNITY OF A QUALITY 3-AND 4-YEAR-OLD PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM." THE TERMS OF THE MODEL LEGISLATION WOULD REQUIRE SUCH A PROGRAM.

THE STATUTE THEN TURNS TO THOSE YOUNGSTERS IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH THE TWELFTH GRADE WHO ARE AT RISK OF SCHOOL FAILURE. "AT RISKNESS" IS DEFINED IN THE EARLY GRADES AS PRIMARILY APPLICABLE TO THOSE KIDS WHO EITHER ARE POOR AND/OR WHOSE FIRST LANGUAGE IS NOT ENGLISH. FROM THE FOURTH GRADE ON, THE MODEL STATUTE DEFINES "AT RISKNESS" IN TERMS OF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE FACTORS SUCH AS TEST PERFORMANCE, ATTENDANCE, DROPOUT RATES, AND SO ON. LET ME MAKE CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THESE DEFINITIONS ARE NOT DESIGNED TO LABEL YOUNGSTERS IN ORDER TO PULL THEM OUT OF REGULAR CLASSROOM SETTINGS, TO TRACK THEM, AND, THUS, TO IMPEDE RATHER THAN FACILITATE THEIR EDUCATION. THE DEFINITIONS INSTEAD GIVE RISE PRIMARILY TO ELIGIBILITY TO <u>ENFORCE</u> THE DELIVERY OF THE SPECIAL MEASURES I AM ABOUT TO OUTLINE. TO STATE IT BLUNTLY, THE DEFINITIONS ARE DESIGNED PRINCIPALLY TO IDENTIFY THOSE WHO WOULD HAVE A RIGHT TO SUE AS A LAST RESORT.

BUT WHAT NEW RIGHTS ARE CREATED? THE FIRST IS A RIGHT TO SCHOOL PRACTICES THAT HOLD A PROMISE OF SUCCESS. AMONG THOSE IDENTIFIED ARE APPROPRIATELY CERTIFIED STAFF, ADEQUATE TEXTBOOKS, SAFE FACILITIES, PLANFUL INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES, AND AFFIRMATIVE PROGRAMS THAT REACH OUT TO FAMILIES TO ENCOURAGE THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE LEARNING PROCESS BOTH AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL. YOU MAY WELL SAY, "BUT THOSE ARE NOT PARTICULARLY BOLD, NEW IDEAS." THEY ARE NEITHER BOLD NOR NEW UNLESS ONE DOES NOT HAVE THEM. AND, AS YOU KNOW, MANY YOUNGSTERS ACROSS THIS NATION,

PARTICULARLY IN OUR INNER CITIES, HAVE SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS DAY AFTER DAY, AD HOC CURRICULA, INSUFFICIENT TEXTBOOKS TO BE ABLE TO TAKE THEM HOME FOR HOMEWORK, AN ATMOSPHERE WHICH SENDS THE MESSAGE TO PARENTS THAT THEY ARE NOT WELCOME IN THE SCHOOLS, AND OTHER SUCH INHIBITING PRACTICES. THE MODEL LEGISLATION CONTEMPLATES CHANGING THOSE THINGS. THE LEGISLATION CONTEMPLATES A SITUATION IN WHICH IF THE CONTEXT IS NOT CHANGED, STUDENTS, PARENTS OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVES WOULD HAVE A RIGHT TO ENFORCE APPROPRIATELY PROMISING PRACTICES.

THE SECOND SUBSTANTIVE PROVISION OF THE STATUTE FOR CHILDREN BETWEEN KINDERGARTEN AND THE TWELFTH GRADE IS THE RIGHT TO BE IN WHAT I REFER TO AS A "SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL." THE STATUTE DEFINES A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL AS ONE IN WHICH SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT OF ITS STUDENTS ARE ACHIEVING A PRE-DETERMINED STANDARD. THAT STANDARD WOULD BE SET BY THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES WITHIN EACH STATE AT EITHER THE STATE OR LOCAL LEVEL. AGAIN, THOSE STANDARDS COULD BE RELATED TO TESTS, OR DROPOUT DATA OR ATTENDANCE, OR OTHER ITEMS THAT A LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM, STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, OR GENERAL ASSEMBLY WOULD DETERMINE TO BE APPROPRIATE STANDARDS ENROUTE TO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION. SOME OF YOU WILL OBSERVE THAT THERE ARE MANY SCHOOLS THAT NOT AT THE SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT LEVEL AND, THUS, TOO MANY SCHOOLS WOULD BE DETERMINED TO BE UNSUCCESSFUL, A FACT WHICH WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. YOU ARE QUITE CORRECT AND THE MODEL STATUTE TRIES TO ACCOMMODATE THAT OBSERVATION BY A PROVISION THAT SAYS A SCHOOL MAY BE EXEMPT FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT HAVING ACHIEVED SUCCESS IF THE PROPORTION OF STUDENTS IN THAT SCHOOL WHO ARE NOT ACHIEVING THE NECESSARY STANDARD HAS

DECLINED BY FIVE PERCENT OR MORE WITHIN THE PREVIOUS TWELVE MONTHS. THE POINT OF THE SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT AND FIVE PERCENT CRITERIA IN COMBINATION IS THAT A SCHOOL MUST HAVE ARRIVED AT SOME PRE-DETERMINED SUCCESS STANDARD OR AT LEAST BE ENROUTE TO THAT STANDARD. IT WOULD NO LONGER BE GOOD ENOUGH FOR A SCHOOL TO SIT YEAR AFTER YEAR, NOT EVEN MAKING PROGRESS. WHY SHOULD A STUDENT HAVE TO BEAR THAT BURDEN?

BUT WHAT IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF NOT BEING A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL? THE STATUTE SAYS THAT A STUDENT AT RISK OF SCHOOL FAILURE, IN A SCHOOL THAT IS NEITHER SUCCESSFUL NOR DEMONSTRATING MOMENTUM TOWARD SUCCESS MAY LEAVE THAT SCHOOL, MAY TRANSFER TO ANOTHER SCHOOL WHICH IS SUCCESSFUL. (LET ME HASTEN TO ADD I AM NOT IN FAVOR OF AN EDUCATION VOUCHER SYSTEM OF THE KIND PROPOSED BY SECRETARY BENNETT AND OTHERS. WHAT WE ARE PROPOSING HAS A CHOICE ELEMENT ATTACHED TO IT, BUT IT IS A CHOICE ROOTED IN OUTCOME.) TRANSPORTATION AND EDUCATION COSTS WOULD BE COVERED FOR ANY STUDENT WHO DID HAVE THE RIGHT TO LEAVE AND GO TO ANOTHER SCHOOL. THE CHOICE OF SCHOOLS THAT A STUDENT COULD ATTEND WOULD NOT BE UNLIMITED. THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM WOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO DETERMINE THE SCHOOL. IT COULD BE ANOTHER SCHOOL IN THE SAME DISTRICT. IT COULD BE A SCHOOL ACROSS DISTRICT LINES. AGAIN, THE CHOICE WOULD BE MADE BY THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM. HOWEVER, WHATEVER THE CHOICE, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE A SCHOOL MEETING THOSE STANDARDS OF SUCCESS TO WHICH I REFERRED EARLIER. SOME SUGGEST THAT THE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT PROVISION WOULD EMPTY MANY SCHOOLS. I DO NOT THINK SO. IF ONE PROVIDES SOME LEAD TIME, IF ONE SETS HIGHER EXPECTATIONS FOR THE SCHOOLS, IF ONE PROVIDES SOME

ASSISTANCE TO THE SCHOOLS, I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE SCHOOLS WILL RESPOND. IN THE MAIN, THIS WILL RESULT IN THE VAST MAJORITY OF SCHOOLS MEETING THE STANDARDS OF SUCCESS OR MEETING THE FIVE PERCENT MOMENTUM RULE ENROUTE TO SUCCESS.

THE TRANSFER PROVISION I DESCRIBED IS THE ESSENCE OF THAT PART OF THE STATUTE. HOWEVER, IT GOES ON TO SAY THAT IF A SCHOOL PERSISTS IN BEING UNSUCCESSFUL, THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM MUST TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION INCLUDING CHANGES IN THE PERSONNEL. IF A WHOLE SCHOOL SYSTEM HAS TOO MANY UNSUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE STATUTE, THEN THE STATE IS OBLIGATED TO TAKE CONSEQUENTIAL ACTION WITH RESPECT TO THAT SCHOOL SYSTEM.

THE THIRD PROVISION OF THE STATUTE RELATED TO YOUNGSTERS IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH THE TWELFTH GRADE REQUIRES INDIVIDUALIZED PLANNING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT RISK OF SCHOOL FAILURE IN THE SCHOOLS WHERE SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT OR MORE OF THE STUDENTS ARE ACHIEVING SATISFACTORILY. WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT INDIVIDUALIZED PLANNING BECAUSE IT CAN BE A STAGNATING, BOILER-PLATE APPROACH TO A DIFFICULT SET OF PROBLEMS. THAT IS WHY UNTIL A SCHOOL REACHES THE DEFINED "SUCCESS" STANDARD, WE DO NOT PROPOSE REQUIRING INDIVIDUALIZED PLANNING. UNTIL A SCHOOL ACHIEVES THAT STATUS, THE FOCUS SHOULD BE ON THE WHOLE SCHOOL. HOWEVER, WHEN A SCHOOL DOES ACHIEVE THAT STANDARD, THERE IS A DANGER THAT SELF-SATISFACTION MAY SET IN. UNDERACHIEVING STUDENTS WHO REMAIN IN THAT SCHOOL REMAIN AT RISK. SOME VEHICLE MUST BE DESIGNED TO CONTINUE TO RIVET THE ATTENTION OF THE SCHOOL AND SCHOOL SYSTEM ON THE DELIVERY OF APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO THOSE KIDS. THE

INDIVIDUALIZED TEACHING AND LEARNING PLAN IS THE ONLY EFFECTIVE VEHICLE THAT WE COULD DESIGN.

FINALLY, THE STATUTE FOCUSES ON YOUNGSTERS WHO HAVE ALREADY DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL. IT CALLS FOR SCHOOL SYSTEMS TO INITIATE PROGRAMS TO FIND THEM AND RE-ENROLL THEM. TOO OFTEN, AS YOU WELL KNOW, PRESENT PRACTICE IS AN INFORMAL PUSH OUT PROGRAM. WHAT WE ENVISION IS A "PULL BACK" PROGRAM. SOME OF YOU MAY BE FAMILIAR WITH A PROGRAM ASSOCIATED WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN REFERRED TO AS "CHILD FIND." WHAT WE HAVE IN MIND IN THIS PART OF THE STATUTE IS A "DROP-OUT FIND" PROGRAM. IT WOULD NOT BE A PROGRAM THAT PUT A YOUNG MAN OR WOMAN READING AT THE FIFTH GRADE LEVEL IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. THAT WOULD BE STUPID. IT IS A PROGRAM THAT ENVISIONS APPROPRIATE LEARNING SETTINGS BEING DESIGNED EITHER WITHIN SCHOOLS OR IN ALTERNATIVE PLACES, PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO LEAD ALL YOUNG PEOPLE TO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION.

ALL KIDS CAN LEARN. ALL KIDS SHOULD HAVE A RIGHT TO A COMMONLY CHALLENGING CURRICULUM. WE KNOW HOW TO DO THOSE THINGS BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT THEY ARE BEING DONE WITH ALL MANNER OF KIDS ALL ACROSS THIS NATION. THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF SUCCESSFUL TEACHING AND LEARNING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT RISK IS NOT EASY, BUT NEITHER IS IT MYSTERIOUS. TO ACCOMPLISH OUR OBJECTIVE OF A VIRTUAL ONE HUNDRED PERCENT GRADUATION RATE BY THE YEAR 2000 WILL REQUIRE THE EXERCISE OF NEW COMMITMENT, BOLD COURAGE, SUPPORT FROM A WIDE VARIETY OF PEOPLE BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, AND MORE RESOURCES. THE PROSPECT IS DAUNTING BUT DOABLE. THERE IS NO MORE COMPELLING ITEM ON THE NATION'S

AGENDA. JAMES AGEE WROTE THAT "WITH EVERY CHILD THAT IS BORN THE POTENTIAL OF THE HUMAN RACE IS REBORN." IT IS OUR OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSLATE THAT POTENTIAL INTO REALITY FOR ALL CHILDREN, INCLUDING THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH WHO ARE AT RISK OF SCHOOL FAILURE.

SHAW WROTE THAT "SOME PEOPLE SEE THINGS AS THEY ARE AND ASK WHY; OTHERS SEE THINGS AS THEY COULD BE AND ASK WHY NOT?" IT IS VITAL THAT WE BE A PART OF THAT LATTER GROUP.

THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME WITH YOU.